

## Fishing Rivers and Streams with Otter's "Soft Milking Egg"© Patterns

By Walt Mueller, "The Otter" 7/11/15

Fishing Otter's "Soft Milking Egg"© patterns in moving waters is much the same as fishing any nymph pattern. While that is a very general statement, you should consider the following points.

### General Fishing Method

First, as with most nymph fishing situations, you must present your **Otter Egg** pattern **at or near the bottom to be most effective**. This is probably **the single most important point** using our patterns as all natural eggs, once expelled by a hen fish on a redd, gently sink to the bottom of the river and rest in the gravels and cobble of the redd she has prepared. As these eggs settle, some are broken loose from the gravels and slowly migrate and drift along the river bottoms. If you look closely at areas that contain trout or salmon redds you will see loose eggs that have drifted below the main redd for quite a distance from that original redd deposition area. River current speed affects that drift distance; in areas of faster flows the drift of these eggs can be considerable. Non-spawning fish, such as rainbow trout or steelhead, behind spawning salmon or brown trout redds in the fall months, all wait for these eggs to drift by enticing them to feed heavily on our **Otter's "Soft Milking Egg"©** patterns just as they do with naturals.

### Leader length and Indicators:

As with fishing any nymph fly pattern, you should use a leader length that matches the river conditions. Usually in the spring spawning months the river and stream waters are high and off color due to early rains and a melting snow base, so a shorter and heavier leader, such as a 7.5 foot length in a 2 X or 3X tippet strength, is used.

In the fall months the exact opposite is usually the case. Rivers and streams are **much lower and clearer** and require a longer leader and tippet. My usual set up is a 9 foot leader at 5X, unless I am fishing for larger trout, salmon or steelhead and then I will go up to 4X or 3X, the same as in during the spring months.

I use a strike indicator that is easily movable, and set the depth of the indicator slightly shallower than the area I am fishing. Oftentimes I adjust my indicator several times in a given run to so my **Otter Egg** is just "ticking" the bottom occasionally. **This is the key to the correct depth.**

### Micro Swivels, Split Shot and Tippet length:

**I then make an exception** by using a **small micro swivel** ("Raven©" brand in size XS to XXXXS(#18-#24)-available at [FishUSA.com](http://FishUSA.com) )) at the end of the leader so I can add an additional tippet that is easily tied to the micro swivel without having to use any blood knots. This way I can easily replace the tippet using whatever strength I need, such as from 3 X to 5 X, very quickly. This system also offers an advantage in adding split shot weight **above the swivel** which prevents the shot from moving below that point. **How many times have you had to slide, re-position and re-crimp your split shot on your leader as you fish a run? And crimp or damage a leader or tippet in doing so?** Using this system of a small micro swivel above the fly and tippet **prevents that from happening**; it also adds a small amount of weight, about the same as a single BB split shot Using a few small split shot above the swivel is all I need to get the **Otter Egg** down to the bottom 6 inches of the water column. I do not like to use a lot of weight and usually will only use 2 or 3 BB size shot; in heavier, faster water I will use 1 or 2 AA shot size. If that is not enough to get my fly down, I compensate by casting further upstream to allow more time for the fly to sink to the

required depth. I use a tippet(s) tied to the micro swivel of **16 to 24 inches long**. Use **longer tippets in lower clear water** in the fall months and **shorter in the spring months** of heavier water flows.

### Otter Egg Sizes and Colors to use:

At the start of my fishing day I use two different size eggs, in two different colors. I simply tie one tippet off the bend of the hook of the first **Otter Egg** to fish this double egg system. For trout, I use a 4 mm and 6 mm egg, or 6 mm and 8 mm egg. If steel heading or salmon fishing, my set up is with a 3 x 6 mm cluster, and a 8 mm or 10 mm egg for these larger fish. I use two different colors of eggs. You will quickly find out which size(s) and color(s) are performing best by using this alternating system as a starting point. Another general rule to follow is that the lower and clearer the water, **the smaller the egg and hook size to use**. In low clear water I will use a 3 mm and 4 mm egg size or the 2 x 2 mm Soft Sucker Spawn fly; **use larger size eggs** in the faster water to improve the visibility of your **Otter Egg** flies in these heavier or off-color water conditions.

Egg colorations vary all over the spectrum. I have seen the same hen produce different shades of egg colors as she spawns. Generally, the Apricot, Tangerine, Buff and Salmon Egg colors are the basic colorations of all salmon and trout species. (These colors are Apricot, Apricot/Silver Flash, Tangerine, Salmon Egg and Buff). But, from these basic colors numerous deviations occur. Some eggs are lighter, some darker as they are deposited. To match these different colorations we have a spread of 17 colors you may choose from.



Collected From below a Clearwater River redd, ID March 2015

Fresh, natural eggs are usually clear, not opaque (occasionally you will find some fresh eggs "milky" and not totally clear), But if eggs are not fertilized, or are damaged or ruptured, they "die" and become "dead" eggs, progressing through numerous color changes. As these eggs "die", they move from a clear transparent, then milky, and then coloration to a solid, opaque whitish color. During this transition they also can develop "spotting" and "mottled" colorations on the egg. I have had Alaska guides tell me they have observed up to 10 different egg colorations of "dying" salmon eggs; hence, the addition in our product line of four (4) Silver and Red Flash colors inside our **Otter Eggs** to duplicate these "dying" egg coloration changes. The "dying" egg colors we offer are Tango/Silver Flash, Apricot Opaque, Tangerine Opaque, Tangerine/Red Flash, Kiwi Opaque, and Dead Egg White. Often, brighter colors may trigger strikes so we have the bright attractor colors, (some which match the egg colors of some salmon species), such as Ruby, Tango, Flamingo, Kiwi, Kiwi/Silver Flash, and Robin Egg Blue.

These are the basics of using our Otter "**Soft Milking Egg**"© patterns so give them a try and **Good Luck!!**